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THE CONCEPT OF *KONFLIKT* / *CONFLICT* IN THE POLISH MENTAL AND LINGUISTIC SYSTEMS

Key words: conflict, metaphor, domain, linguistic system, mental system

Conflict is an omnipresent phenomenon closely connected with the life of any society. This concept can be considered from various angles e.g. as a process in which a single person or a group tries to achieve their own goal by elimination, subordination or destruction of a person or group aiming at gaining similar goals. Because of the clash of interests, fight may arise. What seems to be a significant feature of the concept is the fact that the participants are intransigent, unable to employ a different point of view or attitude, they react very emotionally. Conflict may be perceived as closely connected with making decisions, whether bad or good. One has to decide what strategy or pattern of behaviour to choose: violence or conversation, or avoidance which may result in another decision whether to negotiate, look for a solution or mediate.

According to *Praktyczny słownik współczesnej polszczyzny* (1998), the word in Polish, as well as in English, originated from Latin *conflictus*, however entered the Polish language via English. The mentioned dictionary defines *conflict* / *konflikt* as “zetknięcie się sprzecznych interesów” (*contact between contradictory interests* – the author’s translation). The dictionary gives the following numerous examples (all the English literal translations of the examples in italics below by the author):

konflikt dwu pokoleń *lit. conflict between two generations*

konflikt dynastyczny, narodowy, wewnątrzpartyjny *lit. dynasty, national, interparty conflict*

konflikt zbrojny *lit. armed conflict*

konflikt emocjonalny, psychiczny *lit. emotional, psychological conflict*

otwarty konflikt *lit. open conflict*

konflikt w małżeństwie, w rodzinie *lit. conflict between the married couple, family conflict*

We also find the following expressions there:

strony konfliktu *lit. conflict parties*

źródła konfliktu *lit. sources of conflict*

narastanie konfliktu *lit. growth of a conflict*

popaść z kimś w konflikt *lit. get into conflict with somebody*

rozwiązanie konfliktu *lit. solving the conflict*

uwikłać się w konflikt *lit. get involved in a conflict*

wejść w konflikt *lit. enter a conflict*

konflikt serologiczny *lit. Rh disease*

konflikt politologiczny, polityczny *lit. politological, political conflict*

konflikt psychologiczny *lit. psychological conflict*

konflikt poznawczy *lit. cognitive conflict*

konflikt społeczny *lit. social conflict*

konflikt socjologiczny *lit. sociological conflict*

The dictionary lists the synonyms as well: antagonism, tension, disagreement, collision, discrepancy, dispute, argument, clash of interests, war.

Definitions of the word *konflikt / conflict* taken from 8 different dictionaries of the Polish language published in the years 1962-2016 were analysed. The definitions, however, differed only in terms of their broadness, i.e. a number of given examples.

As it was mentioned above, the word *konflikt* entered Polish from Latin through English. What seems to be interesting, though, is the fact that this notion was not included as the one of foreign origin in *Wielki słownik wyrazów obcych i trudnych* published in 2001, despite the fact that in the previous editions of various dictionaries of foreign words the entry in question was presented. It may be the suggestion that *konflikt* assimilated in Polish to such an extent that it has not been considered as a foreign one any longer.

Conflict seems to be deeply rooted in human conceptual system. The word *konflikt / conflict* is modified by various expressions and structures it is used in, which at the same show the associations and attitudes humans present in connection with the discussed item. Linguistics and cognition are also the fields conflict finds its place within.

A very significant type of *conflict*, unquestionably of importance for, among others, social and political spheres, is *linguistic conflict*, also known as *sociolinguistic conflict*. Wherever there are linguistic minorities, there also exist language conflicts and the issues concerning the rights of these minorities to use their language limitlessly cause numerous disagreements and tension.

These differences in the social status of certain varieties of language may cause the intergroup conflicts leading to some social instability and

even violence, fairly often significant elements, features of conflict as such. A large number of researches have been conducted to discover the link between the level of linguistic variety and the level of conflict intensity and generally speaking the level of language-based ethnic tensions. The role of each language is parallel to the importance of the community that speaks it, the status of a language changes and the state of the group of its speakers changes as well. The range of reasons for such a situation correlates highly with the types of conflicts, that is they are of geographical, psychological, emotional, economic and political nature.

Since cognition is vital in creating the mental and linguistic systems of a human being, *the cognitive conflict* is also to be mentioned here. Cognitive conflict is a psychological state involving a discrepancy between cognitive structures and experience, or between various cognitive structures (i.e. mental representations that organize knowledge, beliefs, values, motives, needs). This discrepancy occurs when simultaneously active, mutually incompatible representations compete for a single response. The detection of cognitive conflict is thought to trigger compensatory adjustments in executive control processes, which serve to reduce and prevent subsequent instances of similar cognitive conflict [Waxer, Morton 2012, 585-587].

According to Piaget, knowledge is constructed when a learner encounters input from the environment and incorporates the new experiences to his/her existing schemata and mental structures (assimilation). When this new assimilated information conflicts with the previously formed mental structures, the result is called a *cognitive conflict* [Erlina 2012]. In Polish, this term is named without the use of the word conflict since it is called *dysonans poznawczy*. However, *dysonans* can be perceived as a term closely associated with the concept of conflict.

The *cognitive affective conflict*, on the other hand, can be seen among people with low self-esteem who want to gain experience and information allowing to boost their self esteem, but on the other hand they aim at keeping the constant level of self-knowledge containing mainly negative elements.

As it can be seen from the above examples, though the selection here is very much limited by the author, conflict indeed is an omnipresent and multi dimensional concept concerning literally every aspect of human life. And if of such an importance, it must occupy a large area within human linguistic system by being productive in creating numerous phrases helping to conceptualise the phenomenon.

What is of interest of this research is the analysis of the concept of *conflict* functioning in the linguistic system of the Polish language. 2500 phrases containing the discussed term were randomly selected from two corpora of the Polish language, namely from *the National Corpus of the Polish Language* and *the PWN corpus of the Polish language*. The immediate linguistic vicinity was analysed in terms of the metaphors employed to express and characterise

the concept in question. The system of ontological metaphors suggested by Lakoff and Johnson [1980], Lakoff [1997], as well as Kövecses [2007] was employed.

Language, or rather the phenomena occurring in it usually follow certain patterns. What is suggested in literature are the sets of metaphors used to conceptualise two concepts namely *argument* which is *spór*, *awantura* and *anger* that is *złość*. The analysis of the collected phrases suggests that the word *conflict*, usually defined via the concept of argument and being to a large extent characterised by negative emotions, seems to follow patterns similar to the aforementioned two.

One of the very frequently employed schemas is the one of the container. Thus, An Argument is A Container (*Spór to pojemnik*) schema is visible in the analysed phrases.

CONFLICT IS A CONTAINER / KONFLIKT TO POJEMNIK

wchodził w konflikt z władzą *lit. entered the conflict with the authorities*
 pozostających ze sobą w konflikcie *lit. staying in conflict*
 jej bojownicy pozostają w konflikcie *lit. her fighters stay in conflict*
 w całym konflikcie iskrzy *lit. it sparks in the whole conflict*
 nie uzyskano rozstrzygnięcia w konflikcie *lit. the decision has not been made in the conflict*
 otwarty konflikt *lit. open conflict*

The participants are inside the container which may suggest imprisonment, impossibility of unlimited movement. This may also imply that they are not the ones who may make fully independent decisions being dependent on the surrounding world and all the possible connections and influences. On the other hand, the participants enter the container, willingly or unwillingly, thus the container has an entrance and that is why it may be considered as welcoming or tempting.

CONFLICT IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER / KONFLIKT TO SUBSTANCJA W POJEMNIKU

wnieść konflikt w moje sumienie *lit. carry conflict into my conscience*
 konflikt utonie w dyskusji *lit. conflict will sink in discussion*
 coraz głębszy konflikt *lit. deeper and deeper conflict*
 rozlewający się konflikt *lit. overflowing conflict*

Again participants are inside the container and deep in the substance. The substance, most probably a liquid surrounds them, swallows them limiting the visibility, movements and in this case decision making.

CONFLICT IS A COBWEB / KONFLIKT TO PAJĘCZYNA

uwikłany w konflikt *lit. caught up in a conflict*

When talking about being surrounded by something that can be possibly dangerous and limiting, another metaphor, the one of a cobweb may be mentioned.

Konflikt / conflict is perceived as an entity, since something abstract is conceptualised via something concrete, tangible.

CONFLICT IS AN OBJECT / KONFLIKT TO PRZEDMIOT

wielki międzynarodowy konflikt *lit. enormous international conflict*

szerszy konflikt *lit. broader conflict*

drobny konflikt *lit. tiny conflict*

This particular entity is easily noticeable due to the fact that it is multi-dimensional.

CONFLICT IS AN OBJECT VISIBLE IN LIGHT / KONFLIKT TO PRZEDMIOT WIDOCZNY W ŚWIETLE

jaskrawy konflikt *lit. bright conflict*

konflikt był jasny i wyraźny *lit. conflict was light and clear*

The object changes under the influence of light reflection. What seems to be interesting is the fact that the selection of phrases does not include any metaphorical expression mentioning colours which become visible in light. Either conflict is colourless or its colours are not perceived by people involved in conflict, they do not pay attention to insignificant shades.

If one can describe the appearance of conflict, it must be visible, and things are visible at the presence of light. Only then can a human being see the world. Thus, there are the following phrases:

jak wyglądał konflikt z Jarosławem Sienkiewiczem *lit. what did the conflict with Jarosław Sienkiewicz look like*

jak ten konflikt u ciebie wyglądał *lit. what did the conflict look like in your case*
 wyraźnie zarysowany konflikt *lit. clearly sketched conflict*

The metaphorical expressions reveal more and more specific features of the object.

CONFLICT IS A MACHINE / KONFLIKT TO URZĄDZENIE

nakręcić konflikt *lit. wind up the conflict*

rozkręciły spiralę konfliktu *lit. they got the spiral of conflict going*

In both cases the machine needs some energy, physically provided, given by the external source. It may suggest that fairly often conflict is inflicted by parties, people, groups not directly involved in it, but because their personal profits are the source of this disastrous energy.

CONFLICT IS A BRITTLE OBJECT / KONFLIKT TO KRUCHY PRZEDMIOT

złamać konflikt społeczny *lit. break social conflict*

This phrase may surprise since conflict ideally is supposed to lead towards positive or desired outcome and destruction is what should be avoided. Moreover, conflict is usually seen as a tough phenomenon, unless it concerns losing a party's hopes.

CONFLICT IS A DESIRED/VALUABLE ENTITY / KONFLIKT TO POŻĄDANY/CENNY PRZEDMIOT

wybrali konflikt *lit. they chose conflict*

zapotrzebowanie na konflikt *lit. need for conflict*

This is another unexpected feature of a conflict object. The concept is most frequently defined in terms of its negative features. Contrary to this tendency, conflict becomes something desired, needed. What follows, only valuable elements are generally desired. If something is desired, it is usually limited. Observing the modern world one cannot say that conflict is rare.

Analysing farther features of the entity, one can see that it gains sharpness.

CONFLICT IS A SHARP OBJECT / KONFLIKT TO OSTRY PRZEDMIOT

ostry konflikt *lit. sharp conflict*

konflikt zaostrzał się *lit. the conflict sharpened*

konflikt utracił na ostrości *lit. conflict lost some of its sharpness*

If an object is sharp, contact with it may be painful. Then, if it is sharp, it cuts, which means it goes deep into the substance which in this case may be the structure of the society, beliefs, feelings, souls and personalities. By the same token, if it cuts, it also separates and conflict by its nature causes separation of people, groups, societies involved.

If an entity is sharp, it can be used as a weapon, and this can give birth to the next set of metaphorical expressions.

CONFLICT IS A WEAPON / KONFLIKT TO BRÓŃ

rozładowali konflikt *lit. they unloaded the conflict*

konflikt storpedowałby wszelkie plany *lit. the conflict would torpedo all the plans*

ten konflikt trzeba rozładować *lit. this conflict must be unloaded*

The mentioned metaphors bring the picture of a gun or explosives. This weapon may underline two features of conflict. Firstly, one can have the gun loaded for some time waiting for the right moment to use it. Conflicts and their sources may exist in the society for some time before they actually explode and their explosion is of benefit for someone. On the other hand, conflicts and their participants use physical weapon to achieve their goals.

To pay attention to a feature more positive of the object, one can mention the metaphor *conflict is a book*.

CONFLICT IS A BOOK / KONFLIKT TO KSIĄŻKA

to samo da się wyczytać z konfliktu *lit. the same can be read in the conflict*

It can be a book or any other written text. A book, though, can be considered as a more prototypical one. A book as such is perceived as a source of information, and most probably the careful analysis of the content of a conflict may provide us with the most important details concerning the source and hopefully the solution to a particular situation.

Remaining in the sphere of elements of a type of entertainment or tools/objects than can be used as pastimes, there is a metaphor:

CONFLICT IS A GAME / KONFLIKT TO GRA

konflikt mógł się rozegrać *lit. conflict could be played*

rozgrywać konflikt *lit. play a conflict*

A game schema implies at least two participants, both of whom count for victory. Moreover, a game suggests a kind of strategy, and hopefully rules obeyed by all of the parties.

CONFLICT IS A PUZZLE / KONFLIKT TO ZAGADKA

kto wyjaśniłby konflikt *lit. it would explain the conflict*

rozwiązać konflikt *lit. solve the conflict*

Conflict conceptualised as a puzzle is potentially difficult to understand and solve. However, aiming at finding the solution forces a person to make some effort and this very solution is the prize in itself, just as it happens when a conflict is brought to its end.

A theatre play is another positive concept used for characterising conflict.

CONFLICT IS A (THEATRE) PLAY / KONFLIKT TO SZTUKA (TEATRALNA)

odgrywać poważną rolę w konflikcie *lit. play a very important role in the conflict*

Frequently, the participants of a conflict are the ones who simply perform a role which was written, prepared for them by the real authors of the conflict. It may happen that they are allowed to improvise to a certain extent or they struggle for the right to play their role according to their own rules.

Personification is another metaphorical process employed to conceptualise conflict.

CONFLICT IS A LIVING CREATURE / KONFLIKT TO ISTOTA ŻYWA

powstaje konflikt *lit. conflict is coming into existence*

konflikt przerósł jego siły *lit. conflict outgrew his strength*

odżył konflikt *lit. conflict came back to life*

w ósmy rok wkroczył konflikt *lit. conflict turned eight*

Conflict as a person appears on the earth, lives, grows, that is it develops. Even if it loses its powers, it can still come back to life, unfortunately in this case.

CONFLICT IS A LIVING CREATURE PRODUCING SOUNDS / KONFLIKT TO ISTOTA ŻYWA WYDAJĄCA DŹWIĘKI

konflikt stał się głośny *lit. the conflict got loud*

konflikt dojdzie do głosu *lit. the conflict will do the talking*

wyciszyli niejednego konflikt *lit. they hushed a few conflicts*

artykułujący się konflikt *lit. conflict getting articulated*

Conflict is audible thus noticeable. If a creature produces sounds, it usually does it consciously willing to draw the attention of the surrounding world or its residents. In a conflict, all the parties articulate their needs and expectations but the voice is the only aspect of conversation due to the fact that conversation or discussion as such does not take place.

CONFLICT IS A BABY / KONFLIKT TO DZIECKO

może rodzić konflikt *lit. it may give birth to a conflict*

rodzi się konflikt *lit. conflict is born*

Being a living creature, conflict has to be born and go through childhood. Although this period of human life and children generally are seen as positive phenomena, this positive aspects are difficult to be seen in conflict.

The next metaphor seems to cover features closer to the general picture of conflict.

CONFLICT IS A RULER / KONFLIKT TO RZĄDZĄCY

dominował konflikt *lit. conflict dominated*

konflikt interesów nie pozwolił *lit. conflict of interests did not allow*

tu nadal panuje konflikt *lit. here the conflict still reigns*

It reigns, introduces its own rules, dominates the people and causes fear. As subjects usually are dependent on the ruler, the parties of conflict frequently have to adjust to what conflict requires.

If there is a ruler with their rules there must be also punishment for those who do not obey them.

CONFLICT IS PUNISHMENT / KONFLIKT TO KARA

skazany na konflikt *lit. sentenced to conflict*

Punishment is unquestionably something not desired though may be expected and caused by the punished one. Thus, if somebody is punished, it may suggest that beforehand something negative or unacceptable happened. Following the mechanism, conflict usually grows for a perceptible period of time.

CONFLICT IS A DISEASE / KONFLIKT TO CHOROBA

naraża ich to na konflikt *lit. it puts them at risk of conflict*

przewlekły konflikt *lit. chronic conflict*

konflikt jest objawem patologii *lit. conflict is the syndrome of pathology*

nieustanny i bolesny konflikt lojalności *lit. constant and painful loyalty conflict*

uśmierzyć konflikt *lit. relieve the conflict*

sparaliżowany przez konflikt *lit. paralysed by the conflict*

konflikt między rodzicami łatwo przenosi się na dzieci *lit. conflict between parents transfers to children easily*

Conflict infects peaceful or acceptable life of people, makes them suffer, is dangerous to their health, is infectious and people have no choice but to look for remedy.

CONFLICT IS DANGER / KONFLIKT TO NIEBEZPIECZEŃSTWO

groził nam konflikt *lit. the conflict threatened us*

konflikt pochłonął setki ofiar *lit. the conflict claimed hundreds of victims*

będą chronić od konfliktów *lit. they will protect against conflict*

Conflict may destroy relationships at different levels; if it escalates, it may destroy human possessions; if turns armed, and following the pattern even further, it may destroy human life. Thus, here there are all the possible features of danger.

As it was mentioned above, the metaphorical schemata presented in literature concerning the subject are employed in this analysis. One of them

is ANGER IS HEAT and what follows CONFLICT IS HEAT / KONFLIKT TO CIEPŁO

However, what is more underlined in the konflikt / conflict metaphors, at least in Polish, is the schema: CONFLICT IS FIRE / KONFLIKT TO OGIEŃ, which highlights the source of heat and the very physical fire rather than the temperature itself:

konflikt tlił się *lit. conflict was glowing*

konflikt rozgorzał *lit. conflict flared up*

zaogniający się konflikt *lit. inflamed conflict*

wybuchł konflikt *lit. conflict burst*

konflikt nie wygaśnie *lit. conflict will not be extinguished*

konflikt żarzy się *lit. conflict is glowing*

podsycając konflikt *lit. fuelling conflict*

starajmy się nie wzniecać konfliktów *lit. let's not spark conflicts*

wygaszanie zbrojnych konfliktów *lit. extinguishing armed conflicts*

The heat/temperature schema is not numerous, though we still can encounter a phrase like these:

rozgrzejemy konflikt na planecie *lit. let's warm the conflict on the planet*

Strong emotions involved in the conflict, even if hidden though waiting for the suitable moment to burst, its often violent course are definitely the features being the basis of this metaphor.

Another schema appearing in literature is ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY, thus we can expect to find the metaphors following the same pattern for conflict.

CONFLICT IS A JOURNEY / KONFLIKT TO PODRÓŻ

or rather

CONFLICT IS THE PATH/THE SURFACE OF JOURNEY / KONFLIKT TO DROGA/POWIERZCHNIA POKONYWANA W CZASIE PODRÓŻY

konflikt przebiega na płaszczyźnie *lit. the conflict runs on the surface*

małżeństwo przez taki konflikt przejść musi *lit. a married couple has to go through such a conflict*

przybywało terenów konfliktów *lit. the number of conflict areas grew*

innym polem konfliktu *lit. a different field of a conflict*

The path is situated on a certain surface. The longer you travel, the more surface you cover. The longer somebody is involved in a conflict, the more complicated it frequently becomes, the more area needs supervision and control. And the further the goal, that is a solution, may be.

The above analysis concerned the linguistic material selected from Polish language corpora. The variety and the number of the listed expressions prove that *konflikt / conflict* occupies quite a significant area in the linguistic system of the Polish language speakers. What was another problem of interest in this analysis were the associations and aspects concerning *conflict* awakened while considering the discussed concept. To research the perception of *conflict* by Polish speakers, the group of students were surveyed. There were

183 respondents, 48 students of Marshal Stanislaw Malachowski High School in Plock and 135 students of The State University of Applied Sciences in Plock. The anonymous survey was conducted in June 2016. The participants were asked to write in Polish a definition of conflict and then create a mind map including all the associations they have connected with *conflict*. They were to perform both tasks within 5 minutes.

Table 1Content of definitions of *conflict* provided by interviewees

High School	The State University of Applied Sciences
two parties 54,16%	two parties 54,97%
more than two parties 33,33%	more than two parties 53,33%
argument 35,41%	argument 40,7%
misunderstanding 28,83%	lack of agreement / compromise 28,14%
difference 22,91%	misunderstanding 27,40%
lack of agreement / compromise 22,91%	quarrel 25,18%
quarrel 20,83%	difference 21,48%

While analysing the definitions of conflict provided by both groups of the surveyed, it is easily noticeable that in both cases exactly the same aspects were taken into consideration when constructing the aforementioned definition. The aspects are as follows: the number of parties involved, synonymous concepts like argument and quarrel, seemingly main reasons that is misunderstanding, difference of any kind and lack or unwillingness of agreement. Both groups differ only in the order of these elements in terms of their placement within the ladder of importance or frequency of usage (only the elements gaining over 20% of frequency were taken into account here).

Apart from the mentioned above features or factors defining the concept of conflict, the subject of conflict is also a significant element. Here we have most often opinions, beliefs, attitudes, but material aspects also happen to be mentioned. Altogether, both groups took into consideration 19 aspects of conflict to define this concept. Contrary to the most frequently used elements, there are those which appeared only once. In the case of high school students there are: confrontation, mistake in communication, war and aggression. In the definitions created by the students of the university one can encounter: imposing, confrontation, war, tension. From the above data it is easy to conclude that the number of the least frequently used concepts is exactly the same in both cases, moreover two of them are identical.

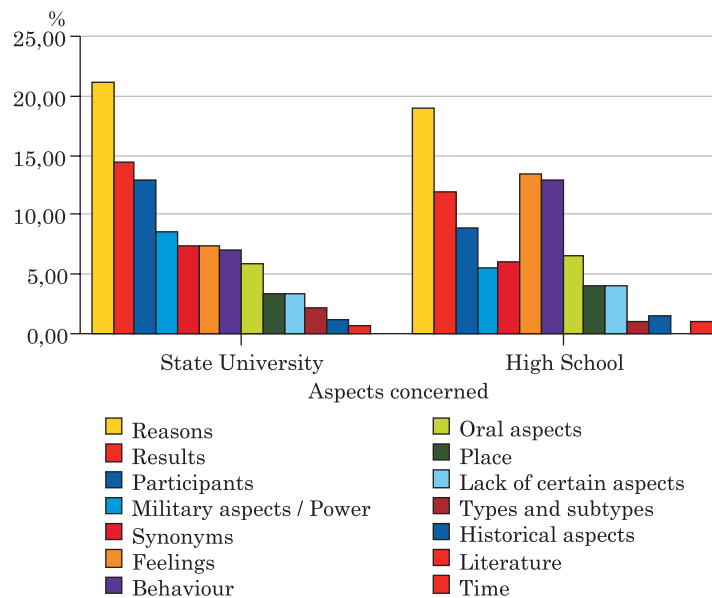
Going into more detail with the analysis of the definitions provided by the students, the sources of conflict should be taken into account. The general mechanism is that one party has their goal, however they encounter an obstacle and conflict arises. Taking into account various fields of science, like psychology, sociology, economy, etc., while identifying the sources more precisely, one should mention: personality clash, wants, needs and values

difference, assumptions and perceptions, personal and group interest, tension and stress, power and influence, and all of them were taken into consideration by the respondents.

As far as the types of conflict presented in literature are concerned, there are the following categories distinguished: intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, conflict within groups, intergroup conflict, conflict between management and staff, interorganisational conflict, community or societal conflict, and again all of them were considered by the surveyed, to a larger or smaller extent.

It is striking that two groups, having no contact with each other while writing the definitions, and probably in majority not being acquainted with each other, define the concept of conflict using nearly identical sets of features, both most and least frequently. The percentage differences are of little significance here. Thus, it can be said that the discussed concept is very deeply socially rooted, definitely not learned but experienced, personally or on the basis of the observation of the other members of the society.

They treated the definition as the one considering mostly the neutral elements and features, those that suggest the very essence of the meaning of the concept. What is also noteworthy is the fact that although undoubtedly not numerous definitions of various words and terms are learned by heart in today's school, the significant number of respondents, if not the absolute majority of them created a definition very close to the ones offered by dictionaries.



Graph 1. Groups of associations enumerated by the students and their frequency – comparison

The participants had no opportunity to use any of them, not only because of not possessing them, though the omnipresence of electronic gadgets including various dictionaries would provide the necessary tools, but first of all due to the limited amount of time to perform the task and the supervision of the teacher. Moreover, since the survey was anonymous, there was no reason for any cheating due to the lack of any competition (Graph 1).

The second task included in the survey was to write down all the possible associations concerning the concept of *conflict*. The phrases provided by the respondents were divided by them into a kind of thematic groups, 15 altogether. Thirteen of them were common for both groups of the surveyed, namely: reasons, results, participants, military aspects, synonyms, feelings, behaviour, oral aspects, types and subtypes, and historical aspects. In the case of the students of the high school, there were no literary connotations, while in the case of the students of the university – there was no association concerning time, though it appeared when they were creating definitions. The comparison of the results shows that in only one case the frequency of the associations dealing with the aspects of conflict is of the same intensity, that is for the reasons. The difference of just one place in the order within the set is visible in the case of place, lack of certain aspects and historical aspects. The most visible difference of at least 4 grades appears for behaviour, feelings and military aspects. The first two were more frequent among the high school students, and military aspects – within the other group.

This research concentrated on the position and role of the concept of conflict in the linguistic and mental systems of the speakers of the Polish language. To analyse the linguistic aspect of the problem, the phrases selected from the Polish language corpora were taken into account. The results show that Polish speakers use a large variety of metaphorical expressions to conceptualise *conflict*. The metaphors follow the schemas of a container, and the substance in a container, a machine, and of course of an object. This object helping to visualise conflict exposes a number of characteristic features making this metaphorical object more defined, that is it becomes a cobweb, a weapon, a book, a game, a puzzle, a play, to name a few. Since we perceive more abstract with the help of less abstract, there is also a person among the metaphorical expressions. This person follows the stages of human life, he/she is a ruler, enemy, etc. Moreover, conflict is perceived as heat, journey, illness, danger. As can be seen from the above, the range of metaphorical expressions is definitely significant.

While summarising the mental perception of the concept of *conflict*, which was analysed on the basis of the results of the survey conducted among 183 students, one can notice that what is automatically associated when creating a definition of *conflict* are the visions of participants, reasons and a number of synonymous expressions. The reasons are of various types, arising from differences in opinions and attitudes. On the other hand, within the mind

maps created by the respondents, again one can notice important regularities. Here, the most frequent association is connected with reasons of conflict. At the very beginning of the scale, there are the results and the participants. What is significant, apart from the numerous similarities, is the fact that the respondents from the high school put feelings and behaviour right after the reasons association. It may suggest that when getting older, one concentrates more on who was involved, why and what the outcome was rather than on the more personal aspects of the discussed concept.

Conflict proves to be conceptualised with the help of the whole range of metaphors. It also appears to evoke a number of associations and aspects, which, despite differences in age, level of education, or social background are, consciously or unconsciously, common for all the members of the society.

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Summary

THE CONCEPT OF *KONFLIKT* / *CONFLICT* IN THE POLISH MENTAL AND LINGUISTIC SYSTEMS

When observing the contemporary world, one cannot fail to notice that in many areas of life, not only in the personal lives of particular people, but also within the public and social aspects of human existence, *conflict* seems to be fairly omnipresent. This paper sets to analyse the discussed concept in the Polish language from two different perspectives.

The first stage of the research deals with the analysis of the immediate linguistic vicinity of the notion of *konflikt* / *conflict* to search for the location of the aforementioned phenomenon within the Polish linguistic system. The aim of this research is to present what types of domains are employed to conceptualise *konflikt* / *conflict*. The analysis is based on the selected corpus data found in the Polish language.

The second stage of the research comprises the analysis of 183 surveys containing two elements: the definitions of *konflikt* / *conflict* and the association maps referring to this concept created by students at the age of 16-24. The aim of this task is to search for the associations attached to the discussed phenomenon by young people, and the similarities and differences within the definitions suggested by them.

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